



August 25, 2005

Dear Community Friends:

General Noise Complaints

Seattle Police receive numerous noise complaints on a daily basis. The City has many diverse neighborhoods; commercial, residential and those zoned for mixed use. Therefore, a level of tolerance is expected. If the noise is illegal, as defined here, police may intervene.

Illegal Noise

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) ordinance 25.08.505 states that property under one's possession cannot be knowingly used for a residential disturbance. By city ordinance, it is unlawful to knowingly cause, make or allow unreasonable noise which disturbs another and to refuse or intentionally fail to cease when ordered to do so by a police officer.

"Unreasonable Noise" includes loud, raucous, frequent, repetitive, or continuous sounds made by: animals; horns or sirens other than emergency equipment; motor vehicles being repaired, tested, etc.; musical instruments or sound amplifiers; and human voices, amplified or unamplified. These restrictions apply between the hours of 10pm - 7am Sunday through Thursday; 11pm - 7am Friday and Saturday.

What You Can Do

For an immediate noise problem, we suggest you initially try contacting the person(s) responsible for the noise. Often, people are unaware of the discomfort they are causing others and if you talk to them about it, that may solve the issue.

However, if you feel uneasy contacting the person(s), or if he/she has been uncooperative, **call our non-emergency line 625-5011** for assistance.

If the noise stops prior to the officer's arrival, call us back to let us know. This frees up the officers

responding to that complaint to go to other calls for service that may be holding. Ask the operator for the event number and note it for future reference. Your complaint will be documented in the computer.

If the noise is a constant, chronic issue, you should mobilize your Block Watch support system to start documenting the disruptive behaviors. Keep a log to note the date, time, location, type of noise, whether police were called, attempts to talk with the person(s) responsible, etc. These logs are powerful tools that can be used to educate the offending person(s). Often when people see the severity of the problem and the nuisance they have created for the neighborhood, their behaviors change in a positive fashion.

If the offending parties don't change behaviors, then you and your neighbors have the option of pursuing civil nuisance action. How to take civil action against a nuisance problem or property will be discussed in an upcoming newsletter.

Police Priorities

Police respond to situations that impact the safety and well being of people first. Please keep in mind that a noise complaint is a lower priority call than crimes against persons or property, such as an assault or burglary. As a result, it may be awhile before an officer can respond, and often by then the noise has ended. In order to issue a noise violation, the officer has to hear the noise him/herself. This is why we encourage you to talk with the offender, log the activity, and consider civil action as a potential remedy if all else fails.

Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon
South Precinct Crime Prevention Coordinator